WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for immunizing an animal against heterologous HIV-1 comprising administering to said animal an immunogen comprising at least one modified HIV-1 envelope protein or fragment thereof, or DNA or virus encoding said at least one modified HIV-1 envelope protein or fragment thereof, or a combination thereof, said modified envelope protein or fragment thereof having a V2 region deletion, wherein said animal exhibits immunity to at least one HIV-1 strain other than that of said immunogen.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein said immunity comprises a humoral response.

3. The method of claim 1 wherein said immunogen comprises a modified HIV-1 envelope protein from a clade-B HIV-1 strain.

4. The method of claim 3 wherein said HIV-strain is SF162.

5. The method of claim 4 wherein said modified HIV-1 envelope protein is SEQ ID No:2 or SEQ ID No:4.

5. The method of claim 4 wherein said DNA encoding said at least one modified HIV-1 envelope protein is SEQ ID No:1 or SEQ ID No:3.

6. The method of claim 2 wherein said humoral response comprises neutralizing antibodies.

7. The method of claim 2 wherein said humoral response comprises protective antibodies.

8. The method of claim 1 wherein said animal is a human.

9. A method for eliciting a heterologous immune response to HIV-1 in an animal comprising immunizing said animal with an immunogen comprising at least one modified HIV-1 envelope protein or fragment thereof, or DNA or virus encoding said at least one modified HIV-1 envelope protein or fragment thereof, or a combination thereof, said modified envelope protein or fragment thereof having a V2 region deletion, wherein said animal exhibits a an envelope-specific immune response to at least one HIV-1 strain other than that of said immunogen.

10. The method of claim 9 wherein said envelope-specific immune response comprises a humoral response.

11. The method of claim 9 wherein said immunogen comprises a modified HIV-1 envelope protein from a clade-B HIV-1 strain.

12. The method of claim 11 wherein said HIV-strain is SF162.

13. The method of claim 12 wherein said modified HIV-1 envelope protein is SEQ ID No:2 or SEQ ID No:4.

14. The method of claim 12 wherein said DNA encoding said at least one modified HIV-1 envelope protein is SEQ ID No:1 or SEQ ID No:3.

15. The method of claim 10 wherein said humoral response comprises neutralizing antibodies.

16. The method of claim 10 wherein said humoral response comprises protective antibodies.

17. The method of claim 9 wherein said animal is a human.

18. A pharmaceutical composition for immunizing an animal against HIV-1 virus comprising an effective heterologous envelope-specific immune response-eliciting amount of at least one modified HIV-1 envelope protein or fragment thereof, or DNA or virus encoding said at least one modified HIV-1 envelope protein or fragment thereof, or a combination thereof, said modified envelope protein or fragment thereof having a V2 region deletion; and a pharmaceutically-acceptable carrier or excipient.

19. The pharmaceutical composition of claim 18 wherein said modified HIV-1 envelope protein is from a clade-B HIV-1 strain.

20. The pharmaceutical composition of claim 19 wherein said HIV-1 strain is SF162.

21. The pharmaceutical composition of claim 20 wherein said modified HIV-1 envelope protein is SEQ ID No:2 or SEQ ID No:4.

22. The pharmaceutical composition of claim 20 wherein said DNA encoding said at least one modified HIV-1 envelope protein is SEQ ID No:1 or SEQ ID No:3.

23. A method for assessing whether a compound is capable of generating protective antibodies in an animal against at least one heterologous strain of HIV-1, said animal capable of developing protective antibodies against wild-type HIV-1, said method comprising the steps of immunizing said animal with said compound, depleting said animal of its CD8+ T-lymphocytes, and assessing the presence of protective antibodies in the said animal to at least one heterologous strain of HIV-1.

24. The method of claim 23 wherein said depleting is carried out by administering to said animal anti-CD8 monoclonal antibodies.

25. The method of claim 23 wherein said compound is an HIV-derived polypeptide or fragment thereof or a DNA or virus encoding said peptide or fragment thereof.

26. The method of claim 23 wherein said immunizing is carried out with a DNA vaccine, a protein, or a combination thereof.

27. The method of claim 23 wherein said neutralizing antibodies are protective antibodies.